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MIDDLE EAST - AFRICA - SOUTH ASIA

This publication is prepared for regional specialists in the Washington community by the Middle East - Africa Division, Office of Current Intelligence, with occasional contributions from other offices within the Directorate of Intelligence. Comments and queries are welcome. They should be directed to the authors of the individual articles.

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Syria

Bombers Arrested

The Syrian government believes it has broken the back of the so-called "Arab Communist Organization," which has claimed responsibility for a rash of bombings in Damascus over the past 10 months. Targets of the bombings included the American pavilion at last summer's Damascus fair as well as the Egyptian liaison office and Jordanian embassy.

The interior minister announced last Sunday that "all members" of the organization present in Syria had been arrested.



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Afghanistan

Key Military Men

1 A pair of military officers appear to have
emerged as important figures in the regime of
President Mohammad Daoud. One of them, General
Ghulam Haider, is the commander of army forces
stationed in the Kabul area. The other, Colonel
1,2 Mohammad Zia, commands Daoud's palace guard. Zia
reportedly is a young leftist, while Haider's
ideological leanings, if any, are unknown. Both
2 men are said to have played important roles in the
coup that brought Daoud to power in 1973.

25X1C [REDACTED] Haider
and Zia are feuding with Afghanistan's top-ranking
military man, chief of staff General Abdul Karim
Mostaghni. A major factor in the dispute may be
1 Mostaghni's reported unhappiness with the Soviet
Union's strong influence over Afghanistan's armed
forces.

2 We have seen no signs that these men or any
other important officers have become disloyal to
President Daoud, who continues completely to dominate
Afghan political life. Whenever the 66-year-old
President leaves the scene, however, officers such
as Haider, Zia, and Mostaghni are likely to have a
considerable influence on political developments.
Haider in particular will probably play a key role.
In addition to commanding key army units, Haider is
a close crony of Daoud and a fellow member of the
Mohammadzai clan, which has dominated Afghan govern-
ment and politics for decades. (SECRET NO FOREIGN
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